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SUBJECT: FINNISH CUSTOMS LAUNCHES PUBLIC AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN AGAINST COUNTERFEITS

¶1. On International Customs Day, January 26, 2007, Finnish Customs, in cooperation with the Finnish Copyright Information and Anti-piracy Center (CIAPC) launched an extensive consumer information campaign against counterfeit products that has won plaudits from both industry and other EU member states. The campaign was the brainchild of Senior Customs inspector Anssi Kartila, a U.S. International Visitor grantee in 1999, and features six posters, covering all kinds of counterfeit products, from music to medicines. The posters are shown at all customs border crossing points, harbors and airports across Finland. Targeting the border crossings is especially effective since Finland shares a long border with Russia which represents the eastern frontier of the EU. The aim of the campaign is to make people realize that not only are their actions illegal, but as consumers they are denying themselves safe and good-quality products.

¶2. The Finnish campaign is part of a broader, EU-wide consumer information project, initiated by the European Community's Anti-Counterfeiting Customs Action Plan. Finnish Customs, inspired by a Canadian campaign a year ago, developed the Finnish counterfeit campaign, and has made the material available to other EU countries. The material is available in Finnish, Swedish and English. Finland's most famous rock group, Lordi, designed the most popular poster which has a photo of the monster-rock, Kiss-inspired lead singer growling about the inferior quality of pirated cds. All EU countries may use the posters, including the Lordi poster, in their own campaigns. The Finnish material can easily be modified (language and picture) to fit any country.

¶3. All six posters have forthright messages to consumers, such as "buy pirated goods - support drug traffic". Other posters remind people of the threat posed by counterfeit products to, for example, health and jobs in Finland ("gambling with your health" "selling counterfeit products is illegal").

Cooperation Good between Copyright Industry and Customs

¶4. The Helsinki-based Copyright Information and Anti-Piracy Center (CIAPC) is a trade association representing all of the copyright industries in Finland. In 1999, CIAPC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Finnish Customs to make cooperation in combating piracy more official and to enable a more thorough sharing of information between these organizations, according to Antti Kotilainen Director of CIAPC. CIAPC collaborated closely with Customs on its current campaign.

¶5. CIAPC has also produced anti-piracy awareness campaigns and educational packages for all junior high and elementary

schools in Finland (age 13-16 and age 11-12). The packages include a teaching kit, slide shows, which can be downloaded by teachers, and a comic book for students.

STATS

¶6. In 2002 Finland was one of the largest EU pirate markets with nearly four million imported pirated discs. The number of pirated copies imported to Finland fell after the amendment of Finland's Copyright Law (effective January 2006), which prohibited all import of pirated products - zero tolerance. Today the situation is clearly better, 700 000 pirated discs were imported to Finland in 2006, according to CIAPC. This decline in pirated discs was offset by a nine percent increase in the sales volume of music recordings in Finland, especially at sales points in south eastern Finland (Kotka and Lappeenranta), a border region close to the most pirated copy markets in Russia (mainly Vyborg and St. Petersburg).

Finns Buy Counterfeit Household Items

¶7. In Finland, most counterfeits are household items rather than luxury goods and their high quality often makes identification impossible without technical expertise. The increasing use of the internet to sell counterfeits (mainly medicines) increases the challenges customs officials face. The number of counterfeit medicine consignments caught by Finnish Customs is estimated at 600 in 2006 compared to only 68 in 2002.

¶8. According to the most recent statistics, 87 000

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counterfeit products worth 3.96 million euros were seized by Finnish Customs in January-June 2006, compared with 1.6 million counterfeit products worth 28 million euros in ¶2005. The drop is explained by the fact that transport routes have been redirected from Finland to less strictly controlled routes (mainly Latvia and Lithuania).

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